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Sir Anthony Sherley

the Author of

Shakespeare's Plays

By

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WILLIAM SHAKESPERE,

OF

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

His Epitaph Unearthed,

AND THE

Author of the Plays run to Ground.

WITH SUPPLEMENT.

BY

SCOTT Frederick SURTEES.

LONDON:

HENRY GRAY, 47, LEICESTER SQUARE.

1888.

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SHAKESPERE'S EPITAPH.

SHAKESPERE'S EARLY HOME.

SHAKESPERE'S CHAIRS.

STRANGE FORM OF MARRIAGE LICENCE.

SHAKESPERE'S LATER HOME AT NEW PLACE.

WHO WROTE SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS? A GUESS AT THE TRUTH.

MR. DONNELLY AND THE CRYPTOGRAM, WITH SUPPLEMENT AND NOTES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

O SKV 2-26-43

BY

REV. SCOTT SURTEES,

OF

Dinsdale-on-Tees.

57027

WILLIAM SHAKESPERE.

CHAPTER I.

WILLIAM SHAKESPERE'S EPITAPHS AND CHAIRS AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

THERE is one point above all others which bears strongly against the theory that William Shakspere, of Stratford-on-Avon, was the author of the so-called Shakespeare's Plays, and that is the audacious doggerel which has been fathered on his memory. William Shakspere, after a disreputable youth, marrying at 17 or 18 a woman many years older than himself, whose child was soon after born, the son of a father who could not write his name, and in debt and difficulty, and who himself (père) had been within the clutches of the law, found his native place too hot to hold him, and if the universal tradition on the subject is worth anything, having a warrant out against him for poaching, "flitted" to London, became a stage-slayer, went in for speculation in building a theatre, laid out his modest earnings judiciously, bought a house in his native place, another in London "within the precinct of the late Black Fryers," retired to New Place, died, and was buried in the church of that dirty town, in

1616, in the chancel, and his epitaph inscribed at his request upon his tomb. He appears to have been in the habit of writing or quoting such, and got the credit for this sort of poetry from his companions. It is plain from the evidence I produce (p. 7) that in and about those years it was the custom in London churches to put verses of questionable merit on monuments and tombs, that it was usual to "crib" or copy them from some one else, and use them as their own. The instances I give (and their name is legion) shows this clearly to have been an every-day practice. The play-actor, with a memory sharpened "by learning his parts," had no doubt seen them on the walls of churches during his residence in London, and was in the habit of repeating and passing off as his own these doggerel rhymes for the edification and amusement of his companions and select friends; but when asked to give them an *extempore* one (evidently there was a leetle doubt as to his powers of composition), knocked off one or two much inferior to those his memory had retained (p. 11). What a specimen of their high literary taste and also of his own, requesting to have such rubbish inscribed upon his grave! No doubt there were many other such-like epitaphs in churches in London which have been destroyed or effaced by lapse of time, but these are a sufficient specimen to show how little variation there is in them, and that mainly in the spelling. The epitaph on the stone over Shakspere's grave has been pressed into the service by a believer in his writings to prove—first, that he "curst those who should move his bones," because that he was fearful that when his renown was acknowledged, his bones would be moved from their last resting-place in the Stratford that he loved,

to find a grave (they have a monument) in Westminster Abbey! and secondly, by a non-believer, that when the imposture was found out, they would be exhumed and cast out to the four winds of heaven! But how about poor "Virginea *optima vita* El. 21," whose Covent Garden grave had on its surface the same curse "for he that moves my bones"? Did her people fear that some after-scandal might occur to show that she was no better than Ann Hathway or Jane Shore, and her ashes be scattered in the swollen flood of the Fleet stream! or that an unknown princess or poetess unrecognised, cared not for a niche in Poet's Corner or a sepulchre amongst the great ones of the land, should her real self and character ever be found out! In searching for epitaphs of a similar style I found the following, which I give as illustrative of what I have mentioned above. They are extracted from an ancient folio, 1736 A.D., The History of London, by William Maitland, F.R.S., which gives an account of the several parishes and churches.

SARAH WILLIAMS, ob. September, 1680.

Reader, stand still and spend a tear
Upon the dust that slumbers here;
And when thou readest, instead of me,
Think on the Glass that runs for thee.

St. Paul's, Shadwell.

JOHN JORDAN, 14th March, 1700.

Stand, Reader, and spend a tear,
And think on me who now lye here;
And whilest you read the state of me,
Think on the glass that runs for thee.

St. Mary, Whitechapel.

MARY PERKINS, Died A.D. 1703.

Reader, stand still and spend a tear
Upon the dust that slumbers here ;
And when thou readest, instead of me,
Think on the glass that runs for thee.

St. Giles-in-the-Fields.

Another similar. No Name. *St. Martins-in-the-Fields.*

MRS. MARY MORLEY. Another similar. *Ratcliff*, 1700 A.D.

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here ;
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

Virginea Optima Vita El., aged 21, ob. 1700 A.D. *St. Paul's, Covent Garden.*

When God was pleased (the world unwilling yet),
Helias James, to nature paid his debt ;
And here reposes ; as he lived he died,
The saying strongly in him verified—
Such life, such death, then a known truth to tell,
He lived a godly life, and died as well.

St. Andrew Wardrobe—St. Anne's, Blackfriers, annexed thereto after the fire.

JOYCE RICH, 1679, E. daughter of —

We two within this grave do lye,
Where we do rest together,
Until the Lord doth us awake,
And from the goats us sever.

Ratcliff Hamlet.

Here lyes the body of WILLIAM WHEATLEY, ob. 10th Nov. 1683.

Whoever treadeth on this stone,
I pray you tread most neatly ;
For underneath the same doth lye,
Your honest friend, William Wheatley.

Ratcliff Hamlet.

GEORGE CLARK, A.D. 1668.

If any desire to be me nigh,
Pray let my bones in quiet ly,
Till Christ shall come in cloudy sky,
Who will us all both judge and try.

EDWARD NORRYS.

O ye, our friends, yat here pas by,
We beseech you to have us in memory;
Somtym we were as now ye be,
In tym to come ye shall be as we.

NATHANIEL SPENCER, 1695.

Pray think on me as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I.
St. James, Clerkenwell.

I have in my possession a Tour through England, by the Rev. R. Warner, in 1801; he gives an account which I have never seen alluded to, of a visit to Stratford-on-Avon. The mention of "cupboard, chair, and tobacco-stopper" is delightful. Vol. II. p. 272, Topographical Works of Rev. R. Warner, 1802. "On inquiring for the birth-place of our great poet, we were not a little surprised to be carried through a small butcher's shop into a dirty back room; which, together with a miserable apartment above stairs, constituted the greater part of the house of his father, Mr. John Shakespeare, a wool-stapler, in the sixteenth century, where William was born April 23, 1564. Here are piously preserved the chair in which he sat, and the cupboard in which he kept his books. A tobacco-stopper also was shown us, said to be that which he had been accustomed to use for some years; but as we found this inestimable relic might have been purchased for *1s. 6d.*, and that parts of the chair and cup-

board might be procured upon similar reasonable terms, we were as much inclined to give credit to their genuineness, as we had felt ourselves willing to believe the traditions of Guy Earl of Warwick, his shield, sword, and porridge-pot. Homely as the tenement was, however, we had much gratification in recollecting that it had been the birth-place of our great poet, and the scene where the first dawning of his gigantic intellect was displayed."

"Shakespeare, you know, had quietly settled himself in his father's trade of a wool-dealer, and to insure greater steadiness in his pursuit of business, had taken unto himself a wife, the daughter of one Hathaway, in the neighbourhood of Stratford. Good-nature or incaution, however, led him into the society of some idle youths, who committed occasional depredations in the parks of the surrounding gentry. Being detected in a nocturnal adventure of this kind upon the property of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Chalcot, near Stratford, he was prosecuted for the offence; and irritating the prosecutor to a still greater degree of violence, by an abusive ballad, he was under a necessity of avoiding the effects of the criminal process, by quitting his business and family at Stratford, and hiding himself in the Metropolis. Some instances of his poetical sarcasms are upon record, but local tradition confirms the assertion now made of their just application. They are written on John Coombe and his brother Tom, both notorious for penury and usury. The former, in a party at which Shakespeare was present, had sportively observed, that he apprehended the poet meant to write his epitaph in case he outlived him, but as he should lose the benefit of the composition if it were deferred till his

death, he begged it might be done whilst he lived, that he might admire the tribute, and thank the writer; Shakespeare immediately presented him with the following lines:—

Ten in the hundred lies here engrav'd,
Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd;
If any man ask, 'Who lies in this tomb?'
Oh! Oh! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John a Coomb.

"The epitaph upon the brother, whether called for or not, I cannot say, is of a similar spirit:

Thin in beard, and thick in purse,
Never man beloved worse;
He went to the grave with many a curse;
The devil and he had both one nurse.

"A flat stone, lying on the pavement over the place of his interment, has this inscription, said to have been written by Shakespeare for his own monument:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
To digg the dust encloased heare;
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."

There is another also ascribed to him quoted in "Shakspere's Poetry," No. 6, Bacon Society Journal, p. 245, which, with the Goliath, makes up the number to five.

Epitaph on ELIAS JAMES. [Mark the lost H.]

When God was pleased, the world unwilling yet,
Elias James to nature paid his debt,
And here reposeth, as he lived he died,
The saying in him strongly verified,
Such life, such death: then the known truth to tell,
He lived a godly lyfe and dyed as well.

The other account of a visit paid, and chair and relics bought, is taken from Samuel Ireland, London, 1795, a handsome volume of well-executed picturesque views of the Avon, and buildings connected with Shakesperian localities, which are generally made use of without acknowledgment.

"As such we shall conduct them to the humble cottage in which he first drew breath, on the 23rd of April, 1564.

"The annexed sketch of it was made in October, 1792. Part of these premises which belonged to Shakspeare are still occupied by a descendant of Joan Harte, sister to our Poet, who pursues the humble occupation of a butcher. His father Thomas Harte died about a year ago at the age of sixty-seven. The kitchen of this house has an appearance sufficiently interesting to command a place in this work, abstracted from its claim to notice as a relative to the bard. It is a subject very similar to those that so frequently employed the rare talents of Ostade, and therefore cannot be deemed unworthy of the pencil of an inferior artist. In the corner of the chimney stood an old oak chair, which had for a number of years received nearly as many adorers as the celebrated shrine of the Lady of Loretto. This relic was purchased in July, 1790, by the Princess Czartoryska, who made a journey to this place in order to obtain intelligence relative to Shakspeare; and being told he had often sat in this chair, she placed herself in it, and expressed an ardent wish to become a purchaser; but being informed that it was not to be sold at any price, she left a handsome gratuity to old Mrs. Harte, and left the place with apparent regret. About four months after, the anxiety of the Princess could no longer be withheld, and her secretary was despatched express, as the fit

agent, to purchase this treasure at any rate; the sum of twenty guineas was the price fixed on, and the secretary and chair, with a proper certificate of its authenticity on stamped paper, set off in a chaise for London." . . . . . .

"In a lower room of the public-house, which is part of the premises wherein Shakspeare was born, is a curious ancient ornament over the chimney, relieved in plaster, which, from the date 1606, that was originally marked on it, was probably put up at the time, and possibly by the poet himself; although a rude attempt at historic representation, I have yet thought it worth copying. In 1759 it was repaired and painted in a variety of colours by the old Mr. Thomas Harte before mentioned, who assured me the motto then round it had been in the old black-letter, and dated 1606. The motto runs thus:

Golith comes with sword and spear,
And David with a sling;
Although Golith rage and sweare,
Down David doth him bring.

"Mr. Harte, of Stratford, before mentioned, told me there was an old oak chair, that had always in his remembrance been called Shakspeare's courting chair, with a purse that had been likewise his, and handed down from him to his grand-daughter Lady Barnard, and from her through the Hathaway family to those of the present day. From the best information I was able to collect at the time, I was induced to consider this account as authentic, and from a wish to obtain the smallest trifle appertaining to our Shakspeare, I became a purchaser of these relics. Of the chair I have here given a sketch; it is of a

date sufficiently ancient to justify the credibility of its history; and as to farther proof, it must rest on the traditional opinion and the character of this poor family."

CHAPTER II.

Shakspere's After-Residence at Stratford-on-Avon.

The nearest *reliable* authority we have for any story connected with William Shakspere is the Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, a man of literary tastes, who kept a voluminous journal, and it is he who gives us the account of "as I have heard, Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merrie meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a feavour there contracted" (was it at the house in Blackfriars? they are hardly all likely to have been at Stratford). Also in his Diary, "Remember to peruse Shakespeare's plays and bee much versed in them, that I may not be ignorant in that matter. . . . Whether Dr. Heylin does well in reckoning up the dramatick poets which have been famous in England to omit Shakespeare?" Note here that Mr. Ward, although Vicar of the parish, and a man of high education, was not acquainted with the works of Shakespeare simply because he had not before realized the point that his parishioner, whose descendants and relatives lived in humble guise, was really the illustrious Shakespeare, whose praise was in all mouths, and that therefore it was not necessary he should be "up in them," as they were not the subject of conversation in the town of his birth and youth and burial, clearly the pressure upon him to

get them up came later on from without. He was not appointed to the Vicarage until 1662.

Diary of Rev. John Ward, from 1648 to 1679: "I *have heard* that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit, without any art at all," and that is pretty well all the Vicar of his native place heard tell of him as a writer of these plays. He has nearly as much to say of "Edmund Alline, a stage-player, who founded the College of Dulwich." "I have heard that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit without any art at all: hee frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year and for itt had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of £1000 a year as I have heard." —From Diary of Rev. John Ward. How came Shakespeare's brother stage-player to be worth thousands, whilst the other's income saved was only about £200 or at most £300 a year? Was he the trusted middle man, or Kemp, or both, in the secret?

Shakespeare's Plays—Who Wrote them?

There is a quaint story printed by the Camden Society—Kemp's "Nine Daies' Wonder," published 1600. Kemp was one of the leading performers in that company in which Shakespere had subordinate parts assigned him, and Edward Alleyne was chief manager. Nash was a friend of his, and his tract, "An Almond for a Parrot," is dedicated to him, "Monsieur du Kempe." He talks of another great journey, and signifies that he keeps it dark whether "Rome, Jerusalem, Venice, or any other place at your idle appoint" (p. 20). One of his letters begins, "My notable Shakerags," mentions "a penny poet, whose first making

was the miserable stolne story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat." In the Returne from Parnassus—dialogue, "*Phil.* What, M. Kempe, how doth the Emperour of Germany? *Student.* God save you, M. Kempe: Welcome from dancing the morrice 'over the Alpes.' *Kempe.* Is it not better to *make a foole of the world as I have done* than to be fooled of the world as you schollers are." There is also that well-known allusion to "our fellow Shakespeare putting them all down, I and Ben Jonson too, and giving him a purge that made him beray his credit" (whatever that may mean). Also p. xiv, "The Travailes of the Three English Brothers, Sir Anthony, Sir Thomas, and Sir Robert Shirley, as it is now play'd by Her Majesties Servants," the following scene is supposed to take place at Venice:—"*Servant.* An Englishman desires accesse to you. *Sir Anthony.* What is his name? *Servant.* He calls himself Kempe. *Sir. Ant.* Bid him come in; Welcome, honest Will, and what good new plays have you?" etc. Nash also speaks of Kemp as being at Bergamo, and an Englishman from Venice meeting him there and having a conversation on the "order and maner of our plays." These allusions, whether feigned or otherwise, show there were communications going on between her Majesties players and foreign parts, which were understood to be connected with "new plays" and "plays of note."

Was there any distant connection between Will Kempe and Sir A. Sherley? His mother's name was Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe, and had three sons—Thomas, Anthony, and Robert. "No three persons of one family ever experienced adventures at the same time so uncommon or so interesting" (from a book "The Sherley Brothers," by one of the same house,

for Roxburghe Club, Evelyn Philip Shirley). Sir Anthony married a first cousin of the Earl of Essex, "who had oftentimes to befriend him." He was sent on embassies to every quarter of the known world. Was ofttimes in communication with Burleigh. We hear of him most in Italy, "sent by Emperor of Germany as ambassador to Morocco"; "hired horses to pass the Alpes" (see Kemp, p. 16); writes to Anthony Bacon, a friend of Essex (p. 22). It appears that he wrote many letters at this period to his patron Earl of Essex, Mr. Anthony Bacon, and Mr. Secretary Cecil. He is found everywhere, sometimes employed as ambassador, sometimes on special missions, sometimes in questionable ventures. Milan, Venice, where at one time he seems to have resided for several years, Rome, Persia, Cyprus, Antioch, Syracuse, Prague, Arabia, Tripoli, Aleppo, Bagdad, Constantinople, Portugal, Spain. Sir Anthony appears (Annals of the Shirley Family) with his brother Sir Robert to have always been in debt and difficulty, "sometimes like to starve for want of bread," profuse and extravagant when money was to be had, utterly careless how it was obtained. Mention is made of "Henry Sherley, kinsman of Mr. James Sherley, the *play-wright*, and who did also excel him in that faculty." Henry Sherley was the author of the following plays never printed: Spanish Duke of Lerna, Duke of Guise, Gasaldo the country lover (p. 270, Annals of Shirley Family). Sir Anthony was ever aiming to get reinstated at Court, and if he had been known to have been mixed up with these plays, it would have been fatal to his chance with Elizabeth. Clearly he had something to do with Will Kempe, a member of Alleyn's company, who acted the prominent parts in Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merchant of Venice, etc. Was not "Will Kempe" the go-

between the manager and the author? Was it not necessary, in order to keep the secret, that the MSS. should not pass from hand to hand, or be entrusted even to the ambassador's bag? Lansdowne MSS. 1608, Milan, Sir Anthony Sherley to his sister, Lady Tracy, "you will say, I should have written; it is true, but there are such intercepting of my poor papers that before God I dare commit nothing to paper, and now less than ever." The extraordinary capacity and knowledge of languages and familiarity with places and scenery by Sir Anthony Sherley, especially in Italy, were clearly unequalled. What share had he in what may be a joint-stock company for the production of these plays? It is now acknowledged that many of the plays are translated from Italian plays and other novels. Did he bring this grist to the mill, find novels and stories, translate them, and forward them by his trusted kinsman Kempe to others to ship-shape them and fit them for the stage? May not the name of Sherley have oozed out amongst "the playwrights," and thence "*Henry* Sherley, who excelled in that faculty," been spoken of as the man who wrote them. Sir Anthony keeps up his friendship with Anthony Bacon, whom no doubt he knew in earlier days at Court. How fond they all were of the name of Anthony. A greater knowledge of men and manners and languages and the leading men and courtiers of the day or such a master of travel existed not in his time. Strange also is it that "The Travailes of the three English Brothers, Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, and Mr. Robert Sherley," should be presented on the stage by this same company of which Kempe was a member. How were they acquainted with them?

These are all singular coincidences, and as I write I have been

perusing Donnelly, and I find nothing to contradict, but much to back up my theories. His chapter ix. vol. i. p. 171, also x. and others passim, might fit Sherley as well as Bacon. (Shylock, p. 224.) Sherley borrows money wherever he could get credit and at other times spends it freely.

> He lends out money gratis, and brings down
> The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
> Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
> In the Rialto you have rated me
> About my monies and my usances.

Sir Anthony, has he not often "sat on the Rialto"? has he not often watched the Argosies come "to road"? Has he not had ventures everywhere? Read over The Merchant of Venice, and say if it could possibly have been written but by one resident there and half Italian in his knowledge and familiarity with people and scenes in Italy itself. What is Antonio everywhere but Anthony "writ new"? See Sonnets, lxxvi.:

> Why write I still all *one*, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth and where they did proceed?

See also Sonnets passim illustrating and explaining "my papers yellowed with their age," "my muse," "my verse."

What are the names of places mentioned? Tripolis, Mexico, England, Lisbon, Barbary, India, "where his argosies with portly sail," "the pageants of the sea." What in Othello? Cyprus on the brow of the sea "stand ranks of people and they cry a sail." May—nay, must have witnessed it in person.

The leading qualifications for the author of Shakespeare's Plays to possess are summed up on the medallion of Sir Anthony

Sherley's picture, Antonius Sherleyus Anglus Eques aurati (Annals of the Shirley Family, second edition, p. 297), "Multorum mores hominum qui vidit et urbes"), and it was his and his alone to fulfil them to the letter. He must have a familiarity with sylvan life, its beauties, its copses, and its ferns and flowers; must have mixed in youthful sports, hawked, *hunted the hare*, and chased the roe and conies in his father's park at Wiston (there is an ancient picture of the Lord of the Manor there, issuing forth on a sporting expedition, p. 264). He no doubt visited Chartley (Erdeswick's Staffordshire). "The park is very large and hath therein red deer, fallow deer, wild beasts, and swine," passed on to Tamworth, the ancient seat of Ferrers family (see Shirley Annals, p. 183). "In the principal chamber is a very noble chimney piece of dark oak, reaching to the ceiling, carved with the story of Venus and Adonis, and the arms of Ferrers and the motto,* '*only one.*'" May be the young Southampton was with him there. His education must have been liberal—Oxford, Hart and All Souls' Colleges—he was at them both. He must have studied at the bar and had great legal knowledge—"Inns of Court" gave him that. English court life, its pageants, its courtiers, he knew them well. Camps he had commanded at Zutphen. His friends and kinsmen were Essex, Lord Southampton, the latter to whom he dedicated his Venus and Adonis, had like himself married a sister Vernon, a cousin of Lord Essex. The fickleness of sovereigns he had felt, he had in some way offended Elizabeth, and that spiteful woman never him forgave; she cut off his kinsman Essex's head and stole his books. "Two Gentlemen of Verona," *Val* to *Duke*:

* See Sonnets, 135, 136, 105.

"These banished men that I have kept withal,
Are men endued with worthy qualities,
Forgive them what they have committed here,
And let them be recalled from their exile:
They are reformed, civil, full of good,
And fit for great employment."

Sherley Brothers, p. 27, to Sir Cecill, "his whole object being if possible to conciliate the Queen, and to obtain leave to return to England. Elizabeth however remained inexorable."—A.D. 1600.

P. 34. Venice, "which city remained his head quarters for some years."—1601.

P. 50. A.D. 1605.—"Four months abode in Saphia, kept open house . . .; to supply his own turn for money he got credit of Jews to take up money, and pay them in moriscos, but at an excessive rate, almost fifty for an hundred."

All foreign courts, even the Czar of Muscovy, the great Sophi, King of Morocco, of Persia; well, he had had missions to them, and been of them and amongst them. A thorough knowledge of a sailor's life, their own peculiar phrases and ship-shape ways are his to speak of as a sailor would; perils by sea and land, he had gone through them all. Languages, most of them on his mouth-tips dwell (Alls Well that Ends Well, "If there be here German or Dane, low Dutch, Italian, or French, let him speak to me"). The habits and the ways, the customs, dresses, manners, laws of almost every known nation then, he had witnessed, thought on, and had both an eye-sight and head knowledge of them. Horses, he knew their points; nightingales (passim), he had listened to their song.

Among the papers relating to the Low Countries in the S.P.O. is the following in illustration of Shakespeare's well-known line,

"Saddle white Surrey to the field," etc. "A note of all the horses of old store, which Thomas Underwood acknowledgeth himself to have received since his coming to your honor's (Sir H. Sidney) service, June 2, 1589, *e.g.*:

	Charge.		Discharge.
Graie	Stanhope, given to		Sir Roger Williams.
Baie	**SHURLIE**	,,	Mr. Ralph Love.
Baie	Skipworth	,,	The Grooms.
Graie	Essex	,,	Mr. St. Barbe.
Graie	Bingham	,,	Sir Philip Sidney.
Pied	Markham	,,	The French Ambassador.
Dun	Sidney	,,	Bonham.
Sorrel	Bingham	,,	Sir Richard Bingham.
Black	Stanhope	,,	To the cart at Fulham."

"Anthony Sherley had a command in the Low Countries among the English when Sir Philip Sidney was killed" (Wood). "This was before Zutphen in 1586."—From Sherley Brothers (p. 4).

"Dispatched with title of Colonel into Brittany under Essex," 1591 (p. 5).

Might he not even have heard Essex or Sir Philip Sidney give orders to saddle his gray charger to the field to-morrow.

Anthony Sherley and no other was he who wrote these plays.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Donnelly's Cryptogram.

I have waited until I had Mr. Donnelly's book before me. The marvellous industry, research and intelligence displayed is simply astounding. I dare not express an opinion on the subject. But why or wherefore should Bacon take such an interest in and spend so much ingenuity on Anne Hathaway and her marriage? It is a strange tale. I have myself been Commissary for Bishops and held Courts for them; have been for years a Surrogate for Bishops and Archbishops, and have had now and then to refuse a license; but I never had or heard of such a case as this, and should certainly have refused to grant a license to allow "*once*" publishing the banns to stand for "*thrice*," and to slur over "consent of parents." It most probably happened that the banns were published the first time more or less surreptitiously, and taking the parents by surprise were not objected to; but if it proceeded to a second "asking," they would be forbidden; it is clear there was an objection known to be hanging up. Turn the bull's-eye light of common sense unto what was too common in parishes of old. Who, why, and wherefore did Farmers Sandells and Rychardson appear upon the scene? They, it may be, held office in the parish, and had caught hold of a lad who, to save the parish a burden or one of themselves a scandal, would for a consideration make an "honest woman of Ann Hathaway."

I myself recollect having a similar case to deal with on all-fours —a farming lad of 19 or 20 and a woman of 29 or 30 near her confinement, when I felt so strongly on the subject, that before the marriage ceremony, I asked the intended bridegroom to come into the vestry to question him as to his being in his sober senses, and if he understood what was the position he was about to make for himself.

One error Mr. Donnelly has fallen into when he uses strong language against William Shakespere for allowing "one quart of sack" (p. 51) to be sent to his guest. It was a common compliment to send such gifts, and the omission would have been thought an insult. In Ambrose Barnes' Memoirs (p. 244) published by the Surtees Society, Appendix, 1592 : — "The Corporation of Newcastle-on-Tyne paid for 20 lb. of sugar in two loaves at 18*d.* a lb., 6 bottles of sack, 10 pottles of white wine, 9 pottles of claret wine, sent as a present to my Lord of Durham as he came travelling to this town." Again (p. 427), 1684:—"6*d.* for one pint of sack when Mr. Shakespeare preached!" Also in Longstaff's Darlington (p. 239), Churchwardens' accounts, 1643:—"One quart off wine when Mr. Doughty preached, 10*d.*; one quart wine and one pinte sack when another gentleman preached, which lay att George Stevenson's, 1*s.* 8*d.*;" 1650, "six quarts of sacke to the minister that preached when we had not a minister, 9*s.*;" 1666, "one quart of sack bestowed on Mr. Jellett when he preached, 2*s.* 4*d.*; more bestowed on him at Ralph Collings', when Mr. Bell was there, 1*s.* 8*d.*"

I know that my friends the public have a strong idea that this subject has been thoroughly threshed out, and are apt to say and think—

Shakespere and Bacon are vexation,
Donnelly is as bad,
His Cryptogram it puzzles me,
His Cipher drives me mad.

Nevertheless, I have an opinion that I have been able to fling a few novel hints upon the question, and so cast it upon the waters to sink or swim.

SCOTT SURTEES.

DINSDALE-ON-TEES,
May 14, 1888.

APPENDIX.

Banns.

Cripp's Laws of the Church, p. 634.—"Before the time of Pope Innocent III. there was no solemnization of marriage in the Church: but the man came to the woman's house and led her home to his own house, which was all the ceremony then used. By the customs of the Anglo-Saxons the marriage ceremony was commonly performed at the house of the bridegroom, to which the bride had been previously taken." (p. 638) "It was formerly the law of this country that marriages celebrated by licence, when either of the parties was under the age of twenty-one years (not being a widow or widower), without the consent of the father, or if he were not living, of the mother or guardians, should be absolutely void." They must proceed either by publication of banns or by license. The word banns is of Saxon origin, and signifies publication or proclamation (Rogers, E. L. 509). This publication for three several Sundays or holidays, unless a license or faculty had been obtained, was enjoined by Canon Law and by the rubric "in the time of divine service" (p. 650). . . . For the avoiding of all fraud and collusion, before such license shall be granted it shall appear to the judge by the oaths of two sufficient witnesses . . . that the express consent of the parents or parent is thereunto had and obtained (Canon 103)." It is singular we find

in Francis Bacon's life, that he tried to break off the match with Sir John Villiers and Lady Hatton's only daughter and heiress, because the mother opposed it, "he strongly advises that the match be not proceeded in without the consent of both parents required by religion and the law of God" (Campbell's Life of Lord Bacon, p. 138).

"Spurrings" they are still called in the North of England, where old customs and our fore-elders' language linger long. I myself in a parish in Wensleydale, where they until recently "raced for the garter," heard the Clerk, to my astonishment, after I had finished the "spurring" for the last time of asking, stand up and in broad accent and loud voice sing out, "God speed them well!" and all the people answered, Amen! It was not any way ludicrous, but really sounded solemn and a beautiful benediction from their fellow-parishioners.—(See Atkinson's Glossary of Cleveland Dialect, "Spurrings, sb. The publication of banns of marriage: the being 'asked' at Church, an immediate derivative from speer, speir, even if not directly from Old Norse spyria.")

The name of Shakespeare, Laborer, in the neighbourhood of Stratford is spelt as above in George I.

"Walter Shakespeare, of Tachbrooke, in the county of Warwicke, laborer, aged forty yeares or thereabouts, being sworne and examined, deposeth as follows:

"To the fourth interrogatory this deponent saith that the cure of the parish has been neglected by the complainant, and in particular this deponent's wife was put by being churched, there being no Divine Service at Tachbrooke one Sunday since the complainant's institucion and induction; and this

deponent further says that notice was given that his wife was to be churched that Sunday, and that this deponent was then and now is an inhabitant of the parish of Tachbrooke."—Record Office, 41st Report, p. 555, 7 George I. Warwick and Stafford Exchequer.

SUPPLEMENT.

See p. 22.—Ante "Anthony Sherley and no other was he who wrote these plays."

Since I wrote the first portion of this pamphlet so much matter has turned up, showing beyond reasonable doubt that I am right in my conjecture as to Anthony Sherley, that I am encouraged to bring it also before the public. "Magna est veritas," and in due time the leaven will work its way.

I had called attention (p. 20) to the Sonnets 135, 136, 105.

SONNET CV.

Let not my love be called idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idle show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To *one*, of *one*, still such and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in *one*, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone
Which three, till now, never kept seat in *one*.

CXXXV.

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *will*,
And *will* to boot, and *will* in over-plus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet *will* making addition thus.

Wilt thou, whose *will* is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my *will* in thine?
Shall *will* in others seem right gracious,
And in my *will* no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in *will*, add to thy *will*
One *will* of mine, to make thy large *will* more!
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill.
Think all but *one*, and me in that *one Will*.

and the enigmatical allusions in them to Sherley's motto "only one." He could not write "only one," as it would have betrayed the author of the plays, but he shaves as near the wind as he dare, and as he says, Sonnet lxxvi., which I mentioned (p. 19):

Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?

And so it does, when we look behind the scenes. They were written in the hope that some one like myself would arise, a light in a dark place, to give honour to whom honour was due, and pluck the jay's false feathers from off the crow. The instant you begin to look for it, you will observe how strangely any-how and oft, in all times and places, in season and out of season, this word "*one*" is wrought into the text of the plays, sometimes in connection with "*all's one*"; (he would not write "only one" straight off, else it would have led, as I said before, to detection, and so he uses the plural "all" instead of singular "only," see Sonnet lxxvi.), and in a much more important position boldly puts it forward (in Quarto 1608, with the name of Shakespeare) "*All's one* or *one* of the four plaies in *one*," called "A Yorkshire Tragedy." Now this play with Anthony Sherley's motto is nothing

more nor less than the story of the ruin of his house; it is hardly disguised under the flimsy title of "A Yorkshire Tragedy." It is important to note that of all the plays this has no *stage names* to it, simply "Husband and wife." Strange! passing strange! Why should Shakespeare care to represent on the stage the history of the Sherley family and ruin? This same company, mark, had played it under the name openly of "The Three English Brothers," prologue, "Clothing our truth within an argument, fitting the stage and your attention, yet not so hid but that she may appear to be herself, even Truth." This would also fit the "Yorkshire Tragedy." What is the substance of the play? It tells the story in blank verse, which we have almost word for word in prose in "The Sherley Brothers," viz. that of Sir Thomas Sherley the elder gambling away his extensive property. "Elizabeth had seized and sold everything belonging to him except (Wiston), his wife's dowry." "*Wife:* If you suspect a plot in me to keep my dowry . . . you are a gentleman of many bloods; think on the state of these *three* lovely boys (the leash of brothers old Fuller calls them) . . . Your lands mortgaged, yourself wound into debts."—"*Wife:* I see how ruin with a palsy hand begins to shake this ancient seat to dust . . . beggary of the soul and of the body, as if some vexed spirit had got his form upon him." His wife had interest enough to get him the offer of a place at Court, etc.

But the writer of Shakespeare's plays was not content with this, an exact account, even to *minute* particulars, of the history of the three Sherley brothers; just compare that history and this "Yorkshire Tragedy" play, and then read the same story (Richard II. Act 2, scene 3).

KING RICHARD II. ACT 2, SCENE 3.

"O, then, my father,
Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd,
A wand'ring vagabond; my rights and royalties
Pluck'd from my arms perforce, and given away
To upstart unthrifts? Wherefore was I born?
* * * * *
I am deny'd to sue my livery here,
And yet my letters-patent give me leave:
My father's goods are *all distrained* and sold;
And these, and *all*, are *all* amiss employ'd.
What would you have me do? I am a subject
And challenge law: Attornies are deny'd me,
And therefore personally I lay my claim
To my inheritance of free descent.

ACT 3, SCENE 1.

Boling. "Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth;
Near to the king in blood; and near in love,
Till you did make him misinterpret me,
Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries,
And sigh'd my English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment:
Whilst you have fed upon my signories,
Dis*park'd* my parks, and fell'd my forest woods;
From my own windows torn my household coat,
Raz'd out my *impress*,* leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To shew the world I am a gentleman.
This, and much more, much more than twice all this,
Condemns you to the death. See them deliver'd over
To execution and the hand of death."

ACT 1, SCENE 3.

Boling. Your will be done: this must my comfort be,
That sun, that warms you here, shall shine on me;
And those his golden beams, to you here lent,
Shall point on me, and gild my banishment.
North. A dearer merit, not so deep a maim

* Motto, "*only one.*"

As to be cast forth in the common air,
Have I deserved at your highness' hand.
The language I have learn'd these forty years,
My native English, now I must forego, etc., etc.
What is my sentence then, but speechless death,
Which robs my native tongue from breathing native breath?

Does not every thoughtful reader pause over it and say to himself, why does he bring forward Busby and Green and rate them and sentence them to death? What for? treason? rebellion? murder? sedition? some rash crime? No; but for having "disparked" his parks and pulled down "his impress" (*only one*!), and his "household coat," and tells us what he would like to have done to his enemies at Court if he had had the chance, as they had done when they cut off his patron and his kinsman Essex's head. Now to return to the reason why he should have written a play to unfold the reasons of his family decay. To Cecil from Anthony Sherley, "The worst sort of the world have taken advantage to lay upon *me* all sorts of defamation" (p. 37), and again, and therefore to clear himself, he shows how it came to pass, and that his father was not in his right senses who incurred "this great debt" (p. 37, Sherley Brothers). Elizabeth had actually "*distrained*" upon his father's goods, had carried off even his blankets and sheets, chairs and arras hangings, feather beds, and silver spoons, and left his mother scanty and beggarly supply for her dowry house, not sufficient for the necessities of every-day life. She had seized and sold the vast lands and possessions of his ancestors. (Stemmata Shirleana, Roxburgh Club, p. 251.) "A description of the Manors sold, all save Wiston dowry." "In 1578 Sir T. Sherley served the office of Sheriff for the counties of Surrey and Sussex. He afterwards became Treasurer at War

in the Low Countries, and having fallen under the displeasure of Queen Elizabeth, and become indebted to the Crown, his estates and personal effects, with the exception of the Manor of Wiston, settled on his wife, were seized." See Lansdowne MSS. Goods seized at Wiston by Sheriff, 1588. Here again I earnestly request comparison with the story in the "Yorkshire Tragedy." Rowland Whyte, "he owed the Queen more than he was worth; his own doings have undone him."

SCENE IV.—HUSBAND—YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY.

"What is there in three dice to make a man draw thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a little round table, and with the gentleman's palsy in the hand shake out his posterity thieves or beggars? 'Tis done; I have don 't i' faith; terrible, horrible misery!—How well was I left! Very well, very well. My lands show'd like a full moon about me; but now the moon's in the quarter—waning, waning; and I am mad to think that moon was mine; mine and my father's, and my fore-fathers'; generations, generations.—Down goes the house of us; down, down it sinks. Now is the name a beggar's; begs in me. That name, which hundreds of years has made this shire famous in me and my posterity, runs out."

To the Rt. Hon. Sir R. Cecil, Knight, from Anthony Sherley:

"Arkangell, 1600, June 10.

"Either the unfairness of the ways or messengers have kept my letters from you. You have not vouchsafed me *one only* answer . . . your honour knoweth the fortunes of my house, and from how great expectations our sins or disasters brought it both in estate and in disgrace . . . my purpose was to satisfy the world

in myself that I was too worthy to have the decay of myself laid on me."—The Sherley Brothers, p. 28. S. P. O. From Sir R. Cecil, 1600. "Her Majesty has increased her former displeasure towards him so far in respect of this presumption as by no means she will suffer him to come into the kingdome; but wholly rejected any such offer" (p. 31).

The truth is, Elizabeth had been stung in her sorest point. Sherley the elder was paymaster to the forces in the Low Countries, and his accounts were deficient. That was never to be passed over. She, who exercised her ingenuity and talents in cheese-paring, who, whilst waiting for the coming of the Armada, spent her time in trying whether, if she gave her sailors fish and oil instead of salt beef, it would not save her a penny or two a day from each separate mess; who never would victual her ships or refit them, or give them shot or powder more than enough for the day. It was owing to the pluck of the half-starved, half-victualled British sailor in non-repaired ships, and in spite of every disadvantage, that the victory was won; not with her help, not with her providence, but in spite of it. Well was it expressed, "Her maddened grasp of passionate avarice." Give the devil his due, as we say in the proverb, but don't give one iota of credit to that stingiest, and vainest of womenkind. Ray's Glossary of words—"Stingy, pinching, sordid, narrow spirited." Read all these quotations from Shakespeare's plays, and compare them line with line and the lives of Sherley's brothers, and conviction must follow. I might just notice that Anthony Sherley's knowledge of the localities and people where most scenes of the plays are fixed was unequalled. He told that which he had seen; he spoke of what he knew. Whateley on Shakespeare, "The characters which he has drawn are masterly copies from nature."

Now to return to Sonnet 105, which has always been a stumbling block to commentators, as it clearly was intended to explain some mystery or enigma connected with the author of the plays. I have never yet noticed any reasonably satisfactory explanation of this Sonnet. Why even the person who wrote on the religion of Shakespeare claims it as a sort of William Shakespeare's Athanasian creed, and meant to express a belief in the Trinity, "three in one!" "*All's one*" I noticed may be met with often; but as for "*one*," it crops up everywhere. In a single scene in a single page you may count in places six "*ones*" ("Henry V." passim), in many cases "lugged" in where the sense and context show it would be far better otherwise, and commentators take trouble to emend it. This is the key to his broad hint (Sonnet lxxvi.), "Why write I still all '*one*,' ever the same . . . that every word doth almost tell my name." But, conjoined with his impress "*one*," there is also a play upon his "armories," the Sherley Trinity of virtues. I find in Lansdowne MSS., No. 49, leaf 28, which I have verified, "That armories were antiently introduced to distinguish noble and illustrious families. The house of Shirley of great estimation, 'Noble light,' 'Gold,' it cannot be corrupted, or the value diminished by earth, water, air, or fire. Gold and sunbeams signifies in virtues, alluding to the Shirley family in particular, 'Field of gold,' faith, charitie, wisdom, and fidelitie, and many others, all of which their arms are the true emblems." There are several pages of this sort in MSS. of British Museum relating to the Shirley family. May not this be the Trinity of virtues mentioned in that puzzling Sonnet 105, "Three themes in *one*"?*

* There is some meaning unknown in the play everywhere on the word "*Will*,'

If Anthony Sherley did not write the plays and sonnets, why does the writer chronicle his every movement? (*passim.*) Why does he give an exact account of his family history (Yorkshire Tragedy), their ruin and his own banishment? Why again in Richard II. Act ii. sc. 3, transforming it to himself in a figure, give an account of their harsh treatment by Elizabeth? Why does that same company act the Brothers Sherley on the stage as well as the Yorkshire Tragedy (quarto W. Shakespeare)? Why in all other plays but that alone are there *stage* names, but in this play when acted (as he wishes it not so to be), a Sherley had interest enough to get his way? Why are all the scenes of the plays laid at places where Anthony Sherley tarries?

Why does Kemp (with "good new plaies"), one of this *same* company, go to meet him at places where he is then known to be, "over the Alpes," "Venice," "Emperor of Germany" (Nine Daies' Wonder).

Why is it that Shakesperians have been so sure that their claimant must have had a classical education, that they have searched the records of Oxford and find no entry? Why do I find "Aula Cervina" Antonius Sherlye, 1579—*equitis aurati* fil. 14 ann. Hart Hall is thus described by a contemporary, 1st Elizabeth: "By the advantage of the most famous and learnedest of tutors he acquired a knowledge not common of the Greek and Latin tongues,

also on frequent mention of *Sun*, *Sunbeams*, etc. See Malone, vol. i. p. 271. In an Eclogue made long since on the death of Sir Philip Sidney (Davidson's Poetical Rhapsody, 1602), we find that celebrated writer lamented in almost every stanza by the name of Willy! "Willy is dead," "of Willie's pipe," etc., etc., A. Sherley's friend and fellow in command at Zutphen = Suid-fen = South fen, or it may be his brother-in-law, Lord Southampton, to whom he dedicated his early works.

of philosophy, of history, of politicks and other liberal sciences."—Would not Shakesperians have been delighted if they could have this said of the tutors W. Shakespere studied under!!

Why, as Clement's Inn is mentioned, are they sure he must have had a legal training, but can find no mention? Why, when I go to the Library of the Inner Temple, do I find at once the name and record I want, covering just the very date I need for my theory? "1583, November, admitted Inner Temple Sir Anthony Shirley, Wiston, Sussex, the second of the celebrated brothers, died 1630." Extract from "Members admitted to the Inner Temple 1547–1660." Why is it the writer is so familiar with the ins and outs, and changes, and intricate governments, and of Italian states and cities, and their laws and ways? Why does he mention what puzzles so many commentators, viz. that Bohemia had a sea-board?* Why in every-day talk does he bring in Venetian proverbs and ways of speech. "Fico," Heylin, p. 124, "When they intend to scoff a man, are wont to put their thumb between two of their fingers, saying, 'Ecco le Fico.'" This would answer to our "taking a sight." Must not the familiar use of this and similar proverbs point to residence? "Basta," what a useful word one finds in it when dwelling in Italy. "A Bergomask dance" (Midsummer Night's Dream). Who could know, unless resident, that the Venetians looked down on them as coarse and vulgar? Notice also all sorts of trifling incidents which prove the writer was a dweller at Venice, and moved about among the Italian States. Why is he always harping upon ancient families being ruined, and the hardship of banishment? Why

* Freeman's Geography of Europe—"Ottokar King of Bohemia, the power of that King for a moment reached the Baltic as well as the Adriatic."—Vol. i. p. 319. See also Peter Heylin, 1682, Italy, p. 103.

are all his provincialisms Sussex and south country? "The many musits through which he goes" (Venus and Adonis). "A hare wee found musing on her meaze" (Return from Pernassus). Surrey Provincialisms, G. Leveson Gower, "Meuse, a hole in the hedge made by a fox, hare, or rabbit, alias a run." Musit occurs in Two Noble Kinsmen, III. i. 97. Halliwell has muse and muset. "Maund, a basket" (Ray's South Country Glossary). Why does he so accurately, in smallest details, describe the horrors of a battle-field, the sacking of a town, the horrible scenes and impossibility of keeping in hand the soldiers? How, if he had not been present, could he have imagined the meeting in conclave and settling over night the lines of to-morrow's battle? What did either Shakespere or Bacon know of that phase of camp life, of battle in retreat and advance, the field before and after, prisoners and their ransom, all true to the letter, of one who had been with Philip Sidney and knighted on the very field of battle in Brittany by the King of France, and sent to the Fleet by Elizabeth's jealousy because he was so knighted?

"Have I not heard in my time lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea puffed up with winds
Rage like an angry boar, chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heavens artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang?"

(Taming of the Shrew.)

All this had Anthony Sherley heard and seen. Had Bacon? Had John Bull's Stratford pet? Then, as for field sports, hunting in every form or fashion, he describes as none but he and Jorrocks could. (R. S. Surtees, of Hamsterley, I know, drew all his pictures from

originals, and that is why they hold their own.) The dying hare, "Venus and Adonis," was there ever anything more touching? The same repeated, "As You Like It," Act II. i. the dying deer, and Jacques weeping over it.

Unless at home he had had an early introduction to stable and kennel management, that sort of learning could not be acquired in after-life; his love for his "crop-eared roan," the descriptions in so many places of his devotion to horses and hounds, he knows them all by name. "Taming of the Shrew," scene 1, "Huntsman, tender well my hounds;" see also Henry VI. scene 2. His description of deer and deer hunts shows that he had watched their habits, couchant and in chase. What a fund of similar knowledge is there in the Return from Pernassus, *not* Parnassus, distinguishing between the names at different seasons of their life, and also the same of "Roa-bucke," "rode on a roan gelding," "the buck broke gallantly," and then comes a similar touching description to that of the death of the hare in the Sonnets, "the hounds seized upon him, he groaned, and wept, and dyed, in good faith it made me weep too." The truth is, when you compare the words and sentiments and expressions with those in Shakespeare's plays,* you feel that one and the same writer was author of them both. Recollect that the modern Pernassus was in the neighbourhood of Bergamo, from whence Kemp had just returned from his visit to Anthony Sherley (see An Almond for a Parrot), and, as Heylyn tells us, "Crema," the inhabitants of, on the destruction "of Parnassus, a town of Lombardy, where before they lived, were permitted to build here." Then it is evident that whoever wrote these plays was a

* Love's Labour Lost, scene 2, names of deer given same as in Pernassus—death of the deer.

Romanist, he sneers at Churchmen and Puritans alike, whilst with regard to Friars and Romanists, he mostly speaks of them with respect. Well, in S. P. O. there is a letter from one Phillipp employed by Cecil "to intercept letters and spy out secrets," dated Rome, 1601: "He (Anthony Sherley) denyeth himself to have been a Protestant ever since his first being at Venice, and here also he hath used to frequent confession every seven or eight days, and upon Easter Eve he did communicate here; upon Easter Day he dined here in the English Colledge."

This will account for the attack on Sir John Oldcastle, egged on by his Jesuit friends, and his dropping the subject when he found that the wave of public opinion ran high against him. Last, but not least, we have a few landmarks of localities. "Burton" and "Wincot" stand out in eminence. Far and near have they been sought after by Shakesperians, but from Dan to Beersheba it is all barren; they locate poor Christopher Sly here, there, and everywhere, or else declare there must be mis-spelling; as follows is what one of the best and shrewdest of the commentators is driven to: Steevens: "I suspect we should read Barton Heath. Barton and Woodmancot, or as it is vulgarly pronounced, Woncot, are both of them in Gloucestershire, near the residence of Shakespeare's old enemy Justice Shallow. Very probably also this fat ale wife might be a real character." Dr. Samuel Ireland, 1795: "From the similarity of the name and the consideration that no such place as Barton Heath has been by any inquiry of mine discovered in the neighbourhood, I am led to conceive that Barton Heath, which lies in this county about 18 miles from Stratford, must have been the spot to which Shakespeare refers. It is worth hazarding a conjecture to have even a chance of tracing him in any one of his haunts." Well, I

need not such subterfuges, but go down to Stanford's and buy an Ordnance Map of Sussex, and find *both* places within an easy reach of Wiston. Names thereabouts seem to be strangely contracted, Wystoneston=Wiston, St. Botulph's Bridge=Bootle Bridge, so also Woodmancote and Edburton; but if that will not please for Christopher Sly's residence (when at home?), there is *another Burton proper*, within a few miles of Wiston; Woodmancote and Edburton are next parish to Wiston, aye, and joining on "Nightingale" Hill, how fond he was of them, he gives us even their notes; his father's woods were as full of them as his park of deer. There is no question, it appears to me, I cannot answer, no puzzled point I cannot explain, no stumbling-block to commentators I cannot take out of their way. Why then not believe me? "All the world against nothing," Romeo, III. 5. Although I have run a dark horse, he has run straight and true, and distanced Bacon, whilst Shakespere has alike dropped out of both betting and running.* Shakesperians have left their Dagon on the ground and hardly lift the feather of a quill to raise him up. Their last resource in argument is (fact) inspiration! in opposition ridicule! As to their other candidate, that weakly youth never could have been physically equal to have taken his share in youthful sports. Campbell's Life of Bacon: "Francis was sickly and unable to join in the rough sports suited for boys of robust constitution," if so he could not have described them so vividly and true; his poetry, such specimens as we have, is hardly-third rate, his prose on stilts, his history discredited. Preface to Bacon's Essays, 1814: "His History of Henry VII. is in these days only consulted by a few."

* See W. Howitt's Visit to Remarkable Places, 1840, p. 84.

Can this be said of his contemporary's Historical plays? Whilst I have known those who have taken Bacon up and laid him down, I have hardly ever known one who after he had put Shakepeare down with reluctance, but longed for the time to take him up again,—the one interested and enchanted, the other bored. Never both the product of the same brain, or writings of the same man. I have told my tale and run my (paper) chase, and now leave it to my umpires, the British and American readers, to decide whether, as Stratford has been pulled up and Bacon distanced, I may not claim from every unprejudiced mind that Sherley has been well ridden and won in a canter. "De l'audace, de l'audace et encore de l'audace!"

THE AUTHOR,
DINSDALE-ON-TEES,
DARLINGTON.

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STEPHEN AUSTIN AND SONS, PRINTERS, HERTFORD.